

# Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department - Health Care for the Homeless

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Minnesota

**Director:** Allain Hankey

**HCH Coordinator:** Christine Reller, RN, MSN

**Medical Director:** Joseph Sierra, MD

**UDS Number:** 051810

## Project Description

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The Hennepin County HCH Project is part of the Human Services and Public Health Department, providing comprehensive health and wellness services, social services, and chemical and mental health services to adults, youth, and children who are homeless through nine health clinic locations at emergency shelters, drop-in centers, and other community based facilities in the downtown Minneapolis area. A total of 31 clinic sessions are provided each week.

### Services

Services are provided by an interdisciplinary team, including nurse practitioners, public health nurses, RNs, LPNs, social workers, a financial worker, volunteer physicians, and other community volunteers. Services provided include primary and preventive health services, including physical assessments, acute illness care, well-child care, immunizations, prenatal assessment, linkage services, dental referral services, and sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment. Chemical and mental health services include assessment, counseling, referral, and linkage. Tuberculosis screening and follow-up are also provided. Public Health nursing services are provided to families while they are in shelters and as they transition to permanent housing. The program provides respite beds and services to adults at two shelter sites.

### Linkages

Referrals for care beyond the project's scope are made to the Hennepin County Medical Center which provides emergency room, specialty clinics, and inpatient services. The project also works closely with the county's TB Control Clinic in co-managing clients being assessed and treated for tuberculosis. The project has arrangements with physician residency programs through the University of Minnesota and with numerous nursing programs in the area. Strong ties are maintained with public and private programs in the community who assist homeless individuals with housing, shelter, food, advocacy, and physical health, mental health, and chemical health services.

### Statistics

Estimated homeless population: 9,000 Project users: 4,801

## West Side Community Health Services

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**Administrative Office:**

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**HCH Office:**

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**Director:** Mavis Brehm

**HCH Coordinator:** Helene Freint

**Medical Director:** Mary Nesvig

**UDS Number:** 053020



### Project Description

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West Side Community Health Services' Health Care for the Homeless program provides medical, mental health, and dental services at four clinic sites and six outreach sites. The HouseCalls program prevents families from becoming homeless due to housing condemnation and ensures basic preventive health visits are updated. HouseCalls is a collaboration between West Side Community Health Services and St. Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health.

**Services**

Primary health services include treatment of acute and chronic illness, well woman and child exams, psychiatry, podiatry, substance abuse counseling and acupuncture, social service coordination, TB screening, HIV/STD prevention, dental hygiene, pharmacy, ophthalmology, chiropractic, and support groups. The program maintains four respite rooms. Medical and dental vouchers provide services at community health centers and pharmacies. A project through the County's Children's Mental Health Center provides psychological evaluation and case management for sheltered children. In warm months (June-September), nurse and support staff take food and supplies to campsites once a week and provide outreach medical care. In winter, staff volunteer weekly at shelter overflow sites to meet and assess needs.

HouseCalls receives clients through referrals from within the health department. A HouseCalls social worker conducts a home visit to assess the needs and then develops an action plan with the family. The staff provides transportation to assist the families in completing Well child visits, prenatal care and dental care. In addition, HouseCalls receives local grant funds to provide utility bill payment assistance and sanitation services. In the last 12 months, HouseCalls prevented 309 households from homelessness.

**Linkages**

Clinical volunteers provide ophthalmology, chiropractic, and pharmacy services. Eyeglass prescriptions are filled at discount by a local hospital. Another hospital organizes an annual supply drive of personal hygiene and over-the-counter medications. Project staff participate in numerous community coalitions.

**Statistics**

Estimated homeless population: 9,600 Project users: 2,720